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TOWER OF BABEL
PART TWO OF FOUR
WAID • PORTER • GERACI
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PORTER-GERACI

THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE HAS GONE HAYWIRE, AND THE BROKERS ARE THE FIRST TO SUSPECT THE TRUTH:
THE WORLD ECONOMY IS ABOUT AN HOUR AWAY FROM UTTER COLLAPSE.
IN COLOMBIA, AN INADVERTENT CASE OF TRESPASSING HAS ESCALATED INTO A GANGLAND RIOT OVER TURF.
A FEW MINUTES AGO, THERE WERE SIGNS CLEARLY MARKING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN WARRING BARRIOS.
THEY'RE USELESS NOW.
ACROSS THE PLANET, THE MACHINATIONS OF THE ASIAN TERRORIST RA'S AL GHUL BEGIN TO ERUPT IN FEAR AND VIOLENCE...
...WHILE, AS EVER, RA'S PATIENTLY AWAITS THE ARRIVAL OF THE ONE MAN MOST LIKELY TO OPPOSE HIM.
THWOOM
HE ARRIVES SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

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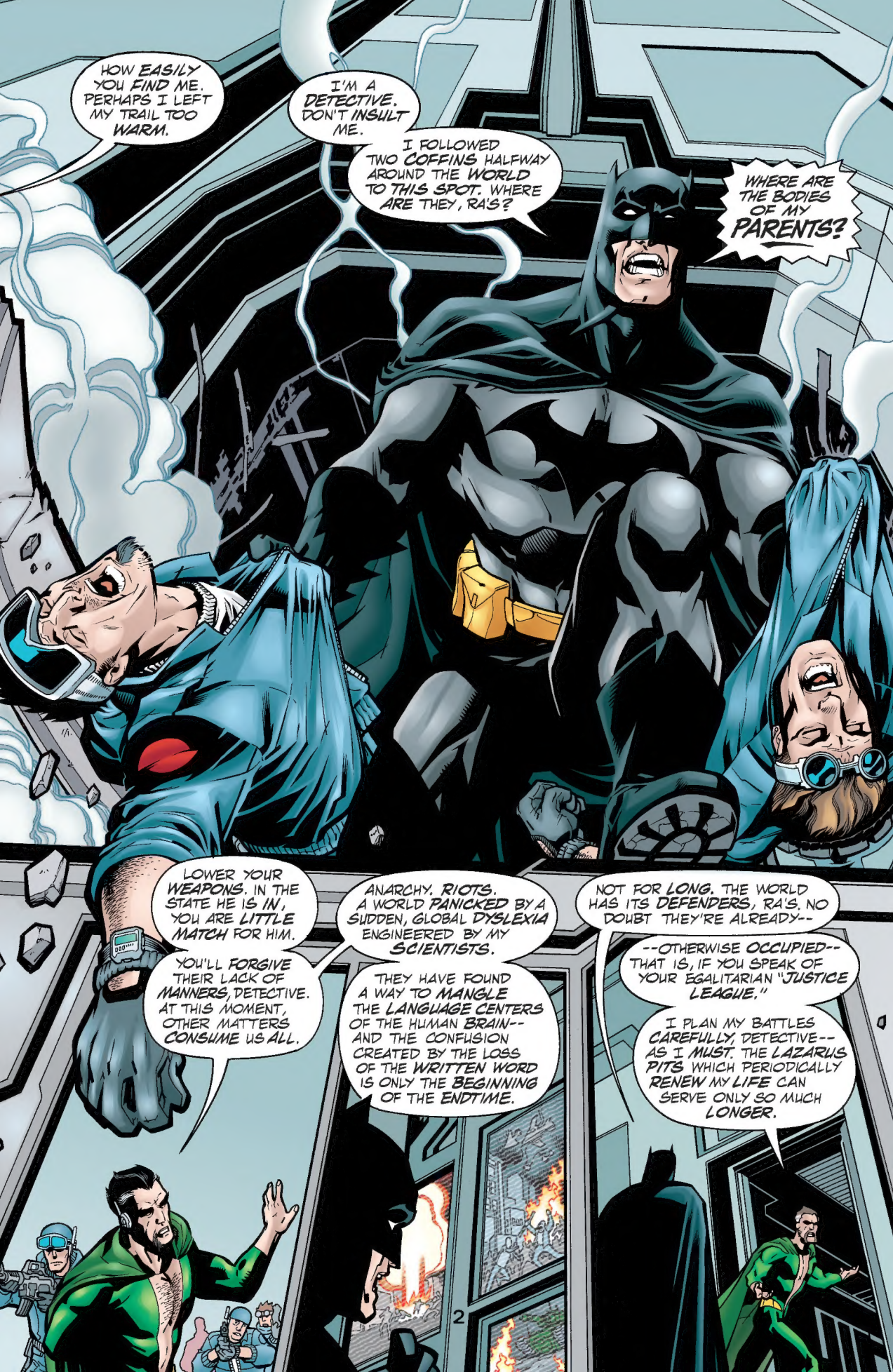
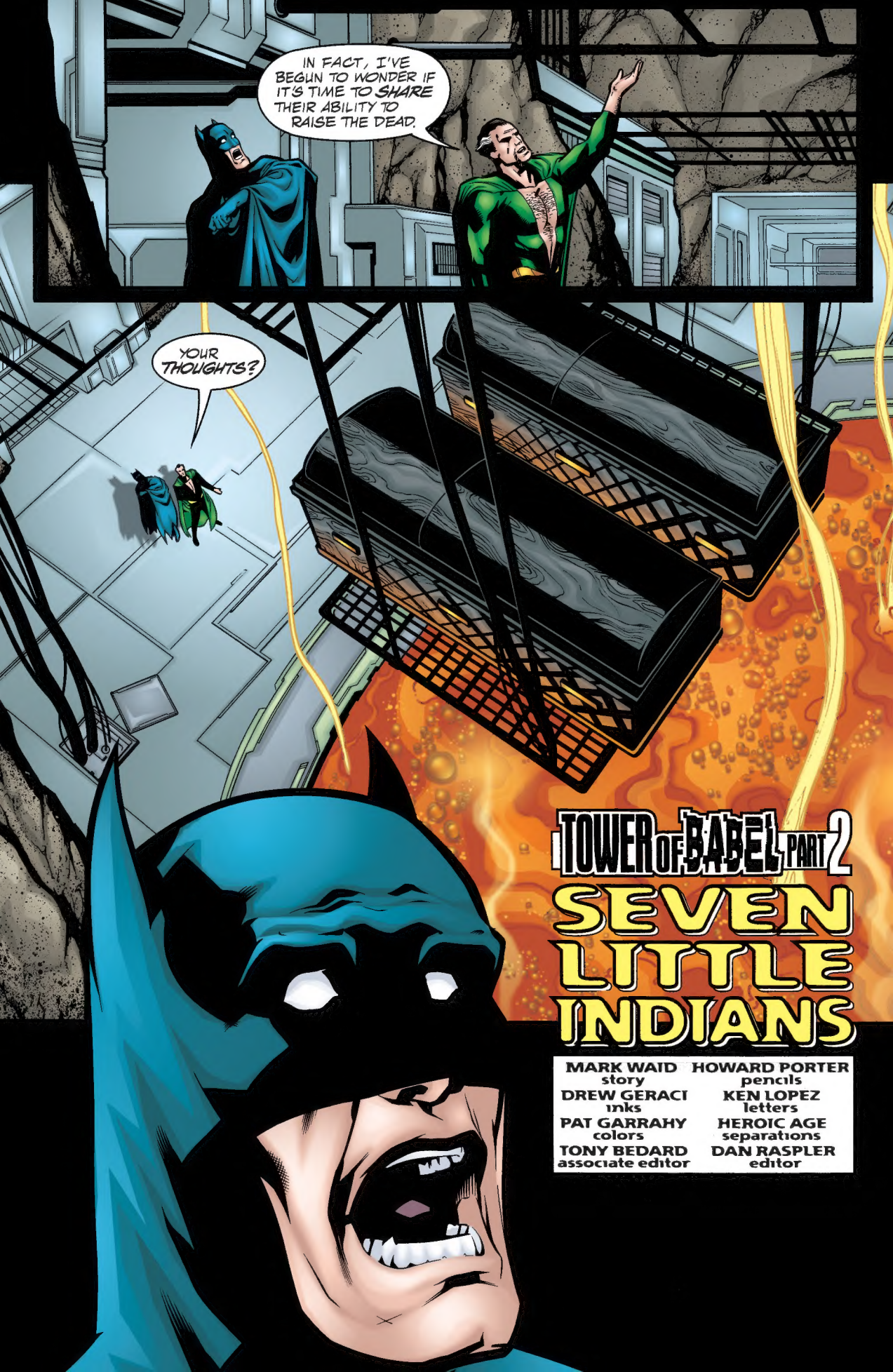
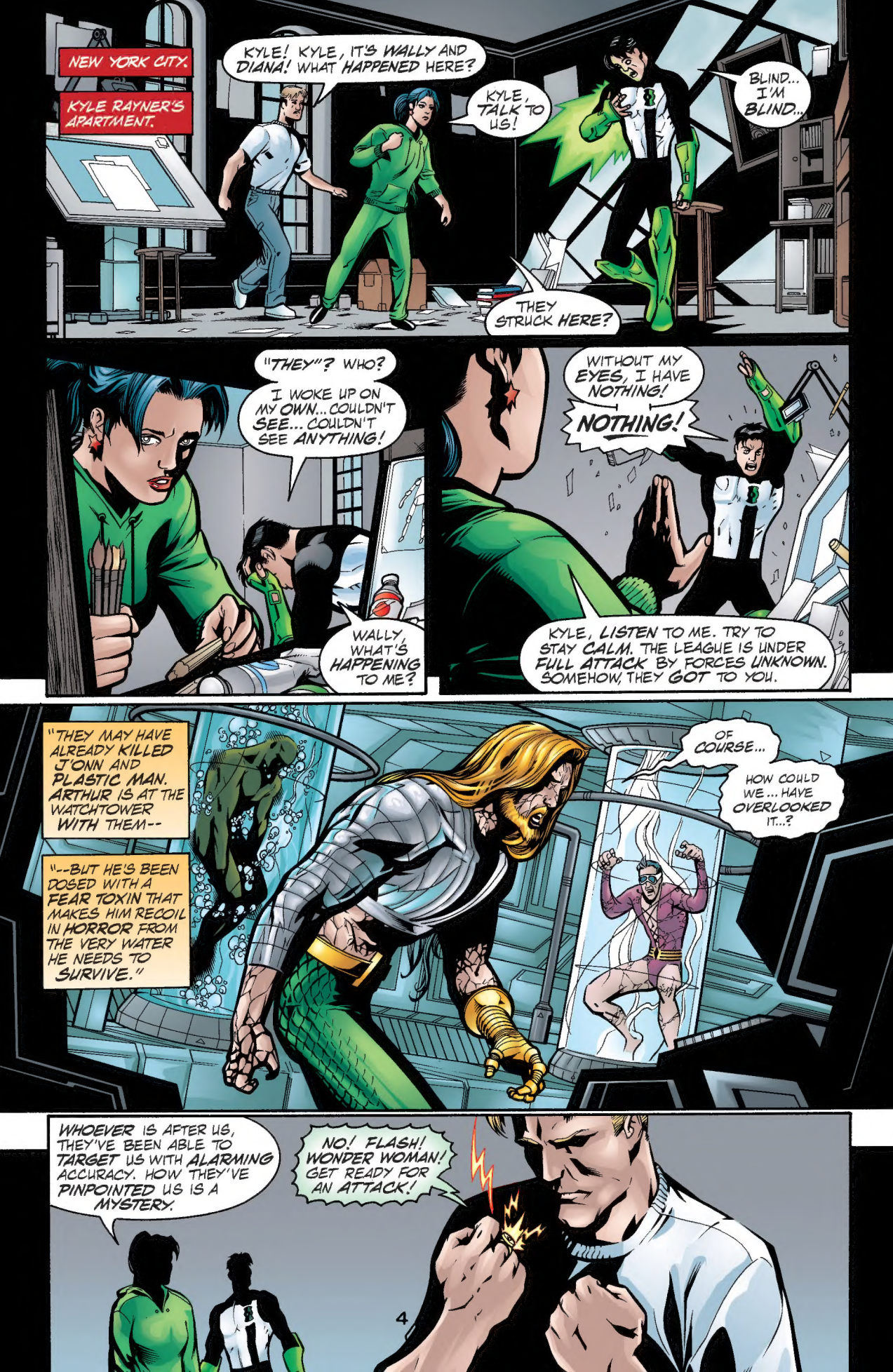
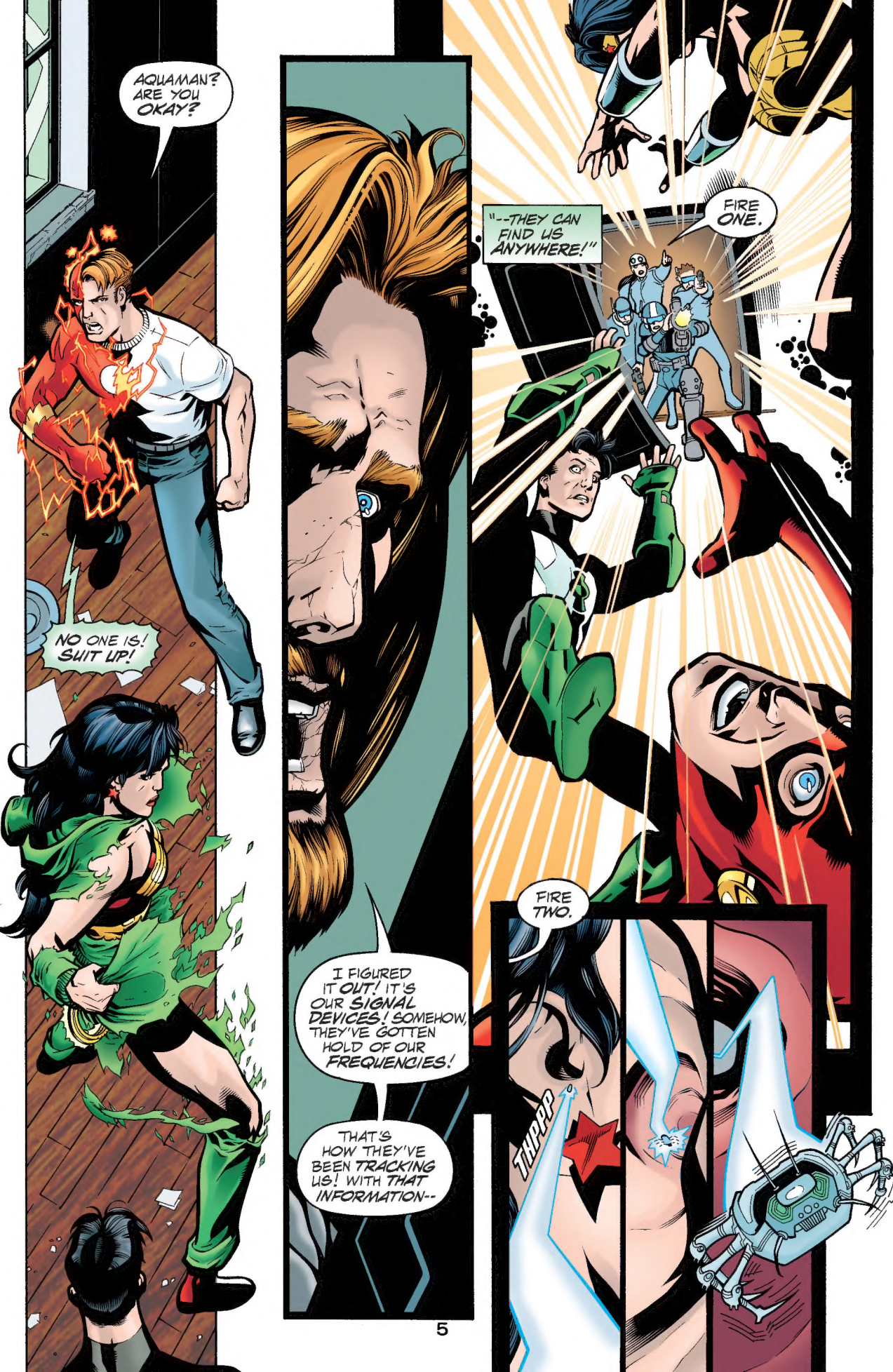
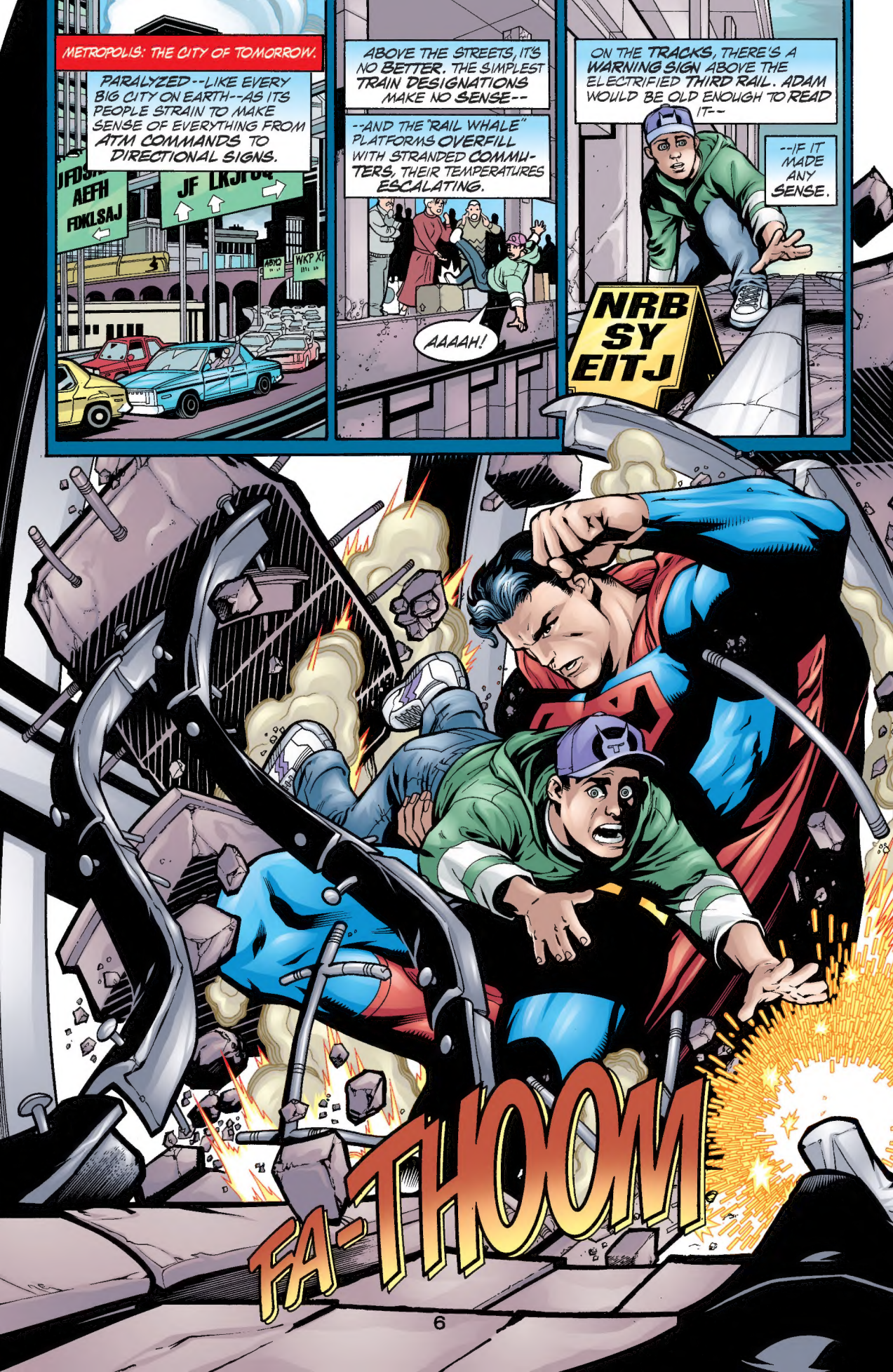
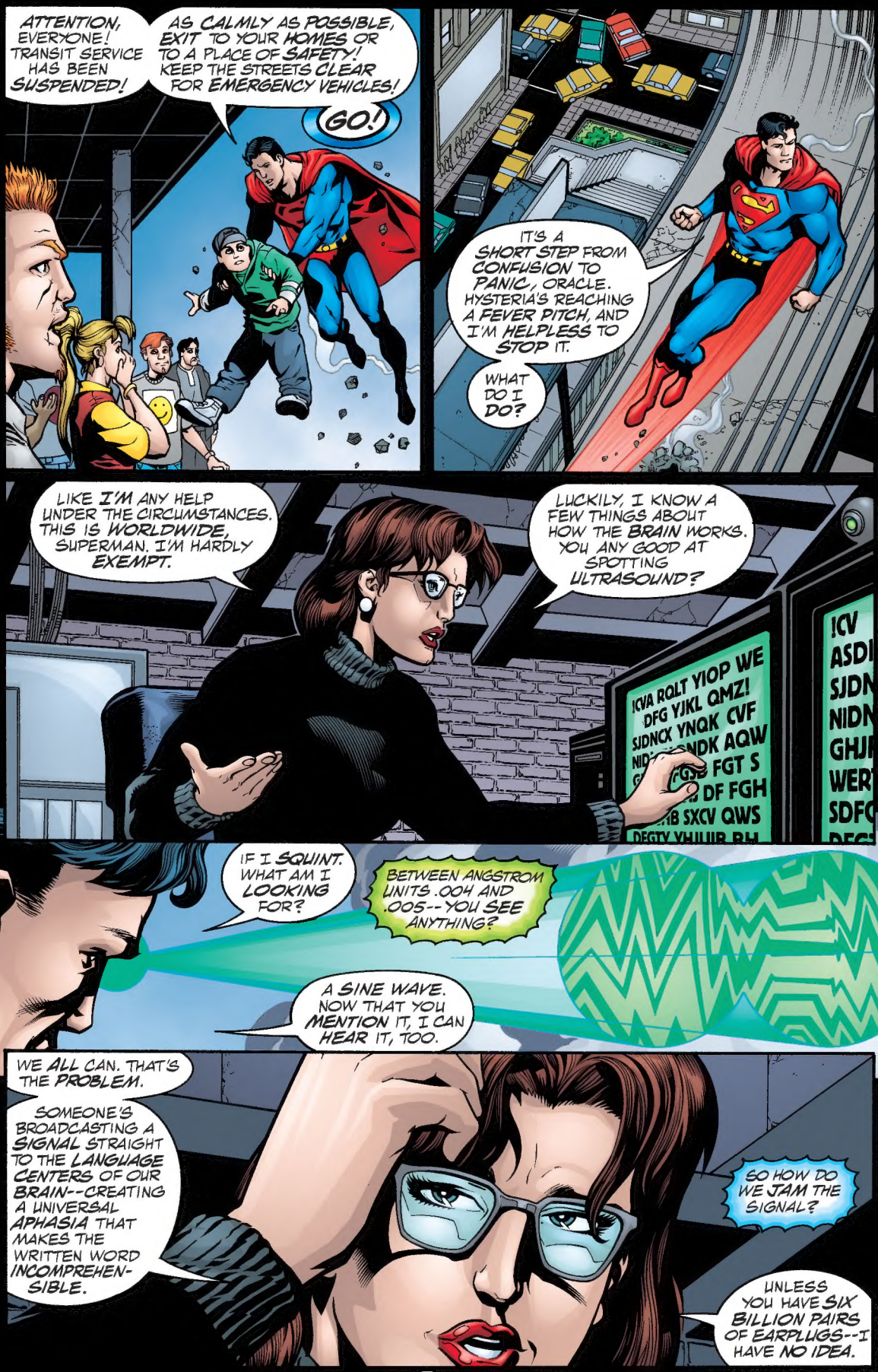

HOW EASILY YOU FIND ME. PERHAPS I LEFT MY TRAIL TOO WARM.
I'M A DETECTIVE. DON'T INSULT ME.
I FOLLOWED TWO COFFINS HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD TO THIS SPOT. WHERE ARE THEY, RA'S?
WHERE ARE THE BODIES OF MY PARENTS?
LOWER YOUR WEAPONS. IN THE STATE HE IS IN, YOU ARE LITTLE MATCH FOR HIM.
YOU'LL FORGIVE THEIR LACK OF MANNERS, DETECTIVE. AT THIS MOMENT, OTHER MATTERS CONSUME US ALL.
ANARCHY. RIOTS. A WORLD PANICKED BY A SUDDEN, GLOBAL DYSLEXIA ENGINEERED BY MY SCIENTISTS.
THEY HAVE FOUND A WAY TO MANGLE THE LANGUAGE CENTERS OF THE HUMAN BRAIN-- AND THE CONFUSION CREATED BY THE LOSS OF THE WRITTEN WORD IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE ENDTIME.
NOT FOR LONG. THE WORLD HAS ITS DEFENDERS, RA'S. NO DOUBT THEY'RE ALREADY--
--OTHERWISE OCCUPIED-- THAT IS, IF YOU SPEAK OF YOUR EGALITARIAN "JUSTICE LEAGUE."
I PLAN MY BATTLES CAREFULLY, DETECTIVE-- AS I MUST. THE LAZARUS PITS WHICH PERIODICALLY RENEW MY LIFE CAN SERVE ONLY SO MUCH LONGER.


IN FACT, I'VE BEGUN TO WONDER IF IT'S TIME TO SHARE THEIR ABILITY TO RAISE THE DEAD.
YOUR THOUGHTS?
TOWER OF BABEL PART 2
SEVEN LITTLE INDIANS
MARK WAID story
HOWARD PORTER pencils
DREW GERACI inks
KEN LOPEZ letters
PAT GARRAHY colors
HEROIC AGE separations
TONY BEDARD associate editor
DAN RASPLER editor


NEW YORK CITY.
KYLE RAYNER'S APARTMENT.
KYLE! KYLE, IT'S WALLY AND DIANA! WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
KYLE, TALK TO US!
BLIND... I'M BLIND...
THEY STRUCK HERE?
"THEY"? WHO?
I WOKE UP ON MY OWN... COULDN'T SEE... COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING!
WALLY, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
WITHOUT MY EYES, I HAVE NOTHING!
NOTHING!
KYLE, LISTEN TO ME. TRY TO STAY CALM. THE LEAGUE IS UNDER FULL ATTACK BY FORCES UNKNOWN. SOMEHOW, THEY GOT TO YOU.
"THEY MAY HAVE ALREADY KILLED J'ONN AND PLASTIC MAN. ARTHUR IS AT THE WATCHTOWER WITH THEM--
"--BUT HE'S BEEN DOSED WITH A FEAR TOXIN THAT MAKES HIM RECOIL IN HORROR FROM THE VERY WATER HE NEEDS TO SURVIVE."
OF COURSE...
HOW COULD WE... HAVE OVERLOOKED IT...?
WHOEVER IS AFTER US, THEY'VE BEEN ABLE TO TARGET US WITH ALARMING ACCURACY. HOW THEY'VE PINPOINTED US IS A MYSTERY.
NO! FLASH! WONDER WOMAN! GET READY FOR AN ATTACK!


AQUAMAN? ARE YOU OKAY?
NO ONE IS! SUIT UP!
I FIGURED IT OUT! IT'S OUR SIGNAL DEVICES! SOMEHOW, THEY'VE GOTTEN HOLD OF OUR FREQUENCIES!
THAT'S HOW THEY'VE BEEN TRACKING US! WITH THAT INFORMATION--
"--THEY CAN FIND US ANYWHERE!"
FIRE ONE.
FIRE TWO.
THPPP


METROPOLIS: THE CITY OF TOMORROW.
PARALYZED--LIKE EVERY BIG CITY ON EARTH--AS ITS PEOPLE STRAIN TO MAKE SENSE OF EVERYTHING FROM ATM COMMANDS TO DIRECTIONAL SIGNS.
AEFH
FDKLSAJ
ABXO
WKP XF
ABOVE THE STREETS, IT'S NO BETTER. THE SIMPLEST TRAIN DESIGNATIONS MAKE NO SENSE--
--AND THE "RAIL WHALE" PLATFORMS OVERFILL WITH STRANDED COMMUTERS, THEIR TEMPERATURES ESCALATING.
AAAAH!
ON THE TRACKS, THERE'S A WARNING SIGN ABOVE THE ELECTRIFIED THIRD RAIL. ADAM WOULD BE OLD ENOUGH TO READ IT--
--IF IT MADE ANY SENSE.
NRB
SY
EITJ
FA-THOOM


ATTENTION, EVERYONE! TRANSIT SERVICE HAS BEEN SUSPENDED!
AS CALMLY AS POSSIBLE, EXIT TO YOUR HOMES OR TO A PLACE OF SAFETY! KEEP THE STREETS CLEAR FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES!
GO!
IT'S A SHORT STEP FROM CONFUSION TO PANIC, ORACLE. HYSTERIA'S REACHING A FEVER PITCH, AND I'M HELPLESS TO STOP IT.
WHAT DO I DO?
LIKE I'M ANY HELP UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IS WORLDWIDE, SUPERMAN. I'M HARDLY EXEMPT.
LUCKILY, I KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT HOW THE BRAIN WORKS. YOU ANY GOOD AT SPOTTING ULTRASOUND?
!CVA RQLT YIOP WE
DFG YJKL QMZ!
SJDNCX YNQK CVF
NDK AQW
FGT S
DF FGH
!B SXCV QWS
!CV
ASDI
SJDN
NIDN
GHJI
WERT
SDFG
IF I SQUINT. WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR?
BETWEEN ANGSTROM UNITS .004 AND .005--YOU SEE ANYTHING?
A SINE WAVE. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I CAN HEAR IT, TOO.
WE ALL CAN. THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
SOMEONE'S BROADCASTING A SIGNAL STRAIGHT TO THE LANGUAGE CENTERS OF OUR BRAIN--CREATING A UNIVERSAL APHASIA THAT MAKES THE WRITTEN WORD INCOMPREHENSIBLE.
SO HOW DO WE JAM THE SIGNAL?
UNLESS YOU HAVE SIX BILLION PAIRS OF EARPLUGS--I HAVE NO IDEA.

OVER RUSSIAN AIRSPACE, PILOTS CAN NO LONGER READ THEIR INSTRUMENTS. JUMBO JETS NARROWLY AVERT ONE ANOTHER
FOR NOW.
AMERICAN MISSILE SILOS ARE FILLED WITH AN EERIE SILENCE-- THE SOLDIERS INSIDE FROZEN, TERRIFIED TO TOUCH ANYTHING MORE COMPLICATED THAN A WATER COOLER.
!CVA RQLT YIOP WE
ASD YJKL QMZ!
SJDNCX YNQK CVFN
NIDNCX DNDK AQW
GHJF DFGSD FGT SD
WERT FGHJ DF FGH
SDFGHB SXCV QWSD
DFGTY YHJUIB BH
HOSPITALS ARE CAULDRONS OF MADNESS AND RAGE. PATIENT CHARTS ARE NONSENSE, MEDICATIONS EITHER (IN CAUTION) WITHHELD... OR (IN DESPERATION) MISAPPLIED.
← CVBQ RTZLJ MM
JKND RPZQ ASBO →
OPERATING TABLES BECOME MORGUE SLABS..

...AS HOPE DWINDLES.
NNNNHH
HURT?
AMUSED. I'VE TAKEN HARDER BLOWS IN AMAZON GAMES.
SURRENDER.
GIVE ME A REASON.
I'M YOUR EQUAL IN EVERY WAY, PRINCESS. YOU CANNOT BEAT ME...THOUGH YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY.
THANKS FOR THE PERMISSION.

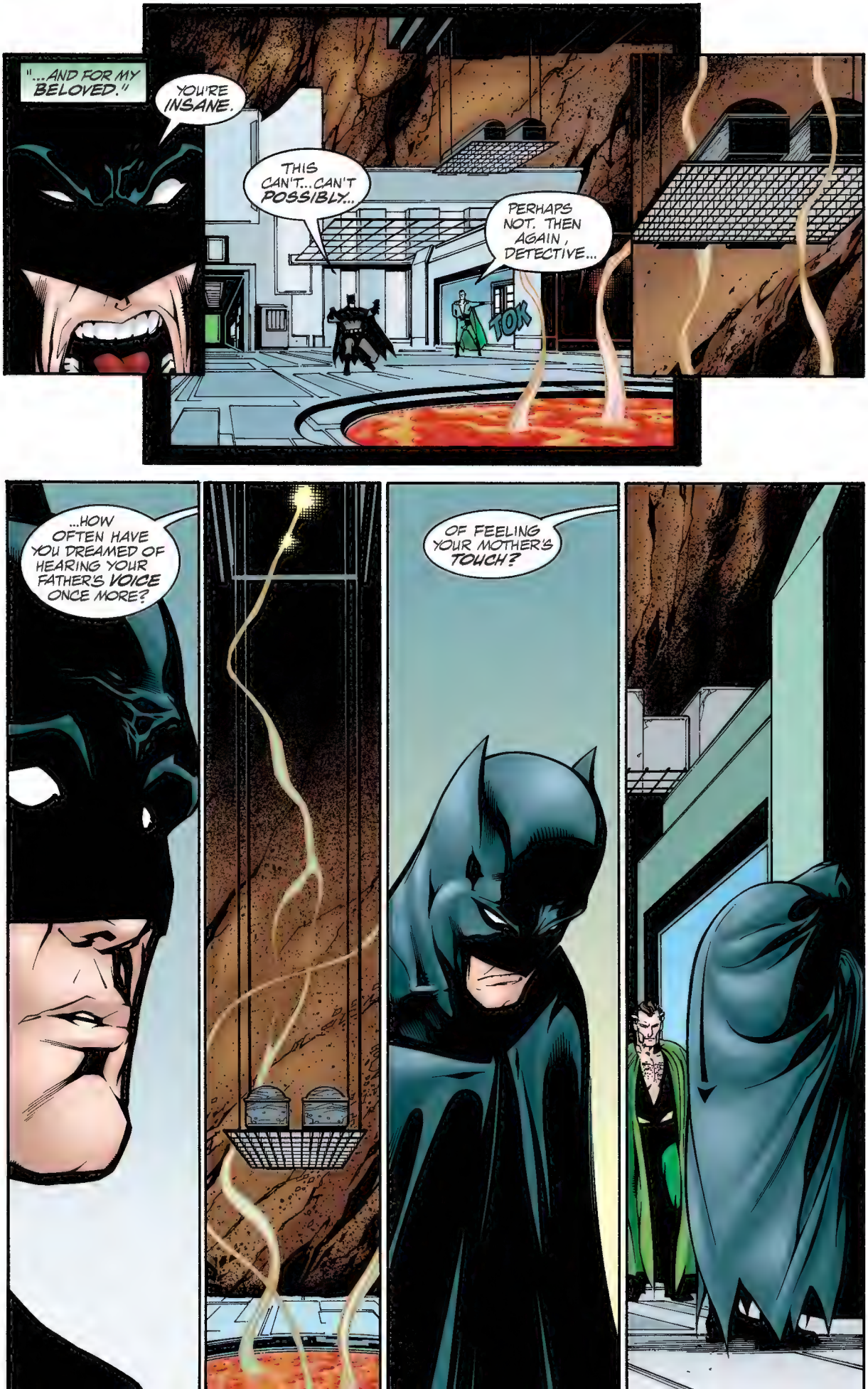
AND WITH THAT, COMBAT BEGINS--NO QUARTER, NO MERCY. NEVER HAS WONDER WOMAN BRAVED SO EVEN A MATCH.
AND THOUGH SHE WILL NOT SHOW IT, DIANA IS ASTOUNDED THAT--HOWEVER IMPOSSIBLY--HER OPPONENT IS EVERY BIT AS FORMIDABLE AS SHE CLAIMS TO BE.
HOUR AFTER HOUR, THEIR BLOWS SOUND LIKE BATTLESHIPS COLLIDING.
THEY DROWN OUT THE VOICE.
DIANA?
DIANA!
DIANA!
SHE CAN'T HEAR YOU. THE VR CHIP IN HER BRAIN HAS HER SO FIRMLY CONVINCED SHE IS ENGAGED IN UNENDING MORTAL COMBAT...
...THAT HER BODY IS UNDERGOING ALL THE RIGORS OF HER IMAGINED EXERTION.
THE MAN WHO DESIGNED THIS TRAP REALIZED THAT WONDER WOMAN'S COMPETITIVE NATURE CAN BE A GREAT WEAKNESS. IN BATTLE, ALL THAT COULD MAKE HER SURRENDER...
...IS A HEART ATTACK.
UNNNNH...
FLASH AWAKENS. DISCHARGE YOUR WEAPON.
DONE.
CHUFF

INSTINCTIVELY, FLASH BEGINS TO VIBRATE THE INSTANT HE FEELS THE PRESSURE OF THE BULLET. HE WANTS IT TO PASS THROUGH HIM.
IT DOESN'T.
NYAAAAAA!
SUCCESS. THE VIBRATORY PROJECTILE HAS LODGED ONTO HIS SPINAL COLUMN.
HE IS EXPERIENCING EPILEPTIC SEIZURES AT LIGHTSPEED.
HOW DO THEY KNOW... SO MUCH ABOUT US? HAVE TO...DO... SOMETHING...
VULKO! VULKO, THIS IS ARTHUR! I NEED...SOMETHING SENT HERE BY... JLA TRANSPORTER...
MY KING! LORD KRANO HAS BEEN DEMANDING YOUR PRESENCE AT THE RHAPASTAN-TURKEY PEACE TALKS! TENSIONS ARE RISING--
NOT...NOW, VULKO! LISTEN... CAREFULLY...!

THE ANDES.
SUPERMAN'S FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE.
SUPERMAN, WHERE--?
BRAINIAC.
BRAINIAC?
HE PUT A GIANT FORCE-FIELD OVER METROPOLIS ONCE. I SAVED THE APPARATUS.
IF I CAN REWIRE IT TO EMIT A COUNTERFREQUENCY--
--I CAN BLANKET METROPOLIS IN A WHITE-NOISE DOME. THEY'RE PROTECTED FROM THE LANGUAGE SCRAMBLER.
OKAY. EIGHT MILLION SAVED. ONLY, OH, 5.9 BILLION TO GO. CAN YOU TRACE THE SIGNAL TO ITS SOURCE?
NOT AS QUICKLY AS FLASH CAN. FLASH, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
FLASH?

OUR WORK HERE IS DONE.
THOK
NO... NO...
CAN'T WORK THE RING...IF I CAN'T SEE...
REPORT TO BASE THAT FLASH AND WONDER WOMAN ARE VANQUISHED, AND THAT LANTERN...
...LANTERN IS NO LONGER OF ANY CONSEQUENCE.
YOU'RE WRONG...YOU'RE WRONG...
YOU'RE WRONNNG!
LOOK OUT!
HE'S GONE BERSERK!

IT'S A VALIANT EFFORT.
KYLE RAYNER POSSESSES THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IN THE UNIVERSE--
--BUT HAS NO WAY TO AIM IT... NO VISION TO SHAPE IT.
LIKE ALL ARTISTS...
THAKRAM
...HE MUST SEE WHAT HE WANTS TO DRAW.
KZZZTK
ONLY ONE TARGET NOW REMAINS. THEN PERHAPS WE CAN PUT THIS MADNESS BEHIND US.
"MADNESS"? LADY TALIA, IT IS AN HONOR TO SOLDIER UNDER RA'S AL GHUL'S ORDERS. DO YOU NOT WISH TO PLEASE HIM?
THERE IS NO "HONOR" IN ASSASSIN'S WORK... AND, FRANKLY, I TIRE OF MY FATHER'S MANIPULATIONS.
ALL I WISH IS PEACE FOR MYSELF...


"...AND FOR MY BELOVED."
YOU'RE INSANE.
THIS CAN'T...CAN'T POSSIBLY...
PERHAPS NOT. THEN AGAIN, DETECTIVE...
TOK
...HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU DREAMED OF HEARING YOUR FATHER'S VOICE ONCE MORE?
OF FEELING YOUR MOTHER'S TOUCH?

OF BEING WORTHY OF THEIR MEMORY.
WHAT I ALWAYS WANT, DETECTIVE. TO WINNOW THE RANKS OF MANKIND BEFORE THEY FINISH LAYING ECOLOGICAL WASTE TO MY PLANET.
TO CREATE ENOUGH FEAR AND PANDEMONIUM THAT THE HUMAN RACE THINS ITSELF TO A MANAGEABLE NUMBER I CAN CONTROL.
AND THIS TIME... I CANNOT FAIL.
I ADMIT, THE JUSTICE LEAGUE GAVE ME PAUSE... BUT MY LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS HAS NEUTRALIZED THEM.
YOU USED THEM AS BAIT, YOU SICK--
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT? WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?
TELL ME!
HOW? WHAT HAVE YOU--
...
OH...
... MY GOD...

VERY WELL. WE LEAVE.
NO.
I THINK NOT.
THWAM
THE MARTIAN? I THOUGHT HE WAS--
¡URGGH!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY FRIENDS?
J'ONN, BE CAREFUL!

THAT SUIT'S MADE TO HYDRATE ATLANTEANS ON LAND! IT'S NOT DESIGNED FOR COMBAT! IF IT TEARS, YOU'LL CATCH FIRE AGAIN!
STRIKE FAST, THEN EVADE!
HE'S WEAK! THE SUIT CONFINES ALMOST ALL OF HIS POWERS!
TAKE HIM
DOWN!
SHRAAK
ARRRGH!
SSSSS
IT'S OKAY, J'ONN. DON'T MOVE.

SHE'S MINE.
SUPERMAN! SUPERMAN, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
IT'S NO USE, DETECTIVE--I FORESAW THIS--AND YOUR SIGNAL DEVICE CANNOT PENETRATE THE WALLS OF THIS COMPOUND.
YOUR WARNINGS FALL ON DEAF EARS.
MEN, STOP HIM!
DO NOT LET HIM LEAVE!

WHATEVER YOU'VE DONE HERE, YOU'LL... UN... DO...
GASP!
?
PAIN... LIKE KRYPTONITE...
...BUT THAT'S NOT...
OH, IT IS. IN FACT, A VERY SPECIAL PIECE.
THE MAN IT BELONGS TO PERFORMED A SERIES OF EXPERIMENTS ON IT. HE MANAGED TO ACCELERATE ITS RADIOACTIVE HALF-LIFE-- AS INDICATED BY ITS COLOR-SHIFT.
HIS IDEA WAS TO MAKE IT LESS LETHAL, BUT STILL CRIPPLING TO THE KRYPTONIAN PHYSIOLOGY.
TO DISCOVER WHAT SORT OF UNPREDICTABLE CHANGES IT MIGHT WREAK IN YOUR CELLULAR STRUCTURE.
ACCORDING TO HIS NOTES, IT MAY NOT KILL YOU--
--BUT YOU'LL WISH YOU WERE DEAD.
SUPERMAN! FOR THE LOVE OF GOD! RETREAT! RETREAT!

GET OUT OF THERE--
--BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
AAAAAAAAA!

THAT'S WHY RA'S WANTED ME DISTRACTED-- HE COULDN'T RISK MY WARNING YOU!
ALL THE PLANS, THE TRAPS, THE SIGNAL TRACKERS--
--THEY WERE MINE!
SUPERMAN-- I DID THIS TO YOU!
TO BE CONTINUED!

" [A] comic legend."
– ROLLING STONE

GRANT MORRISON

"[Grant Morrison is] comics's high shaman."
– WASHINGTON POST

"[Grant Morrison] is probably my favorite writer. That guy has more ideas in his pinky than most people do in a lifetime."
– GERARD WAY
from MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

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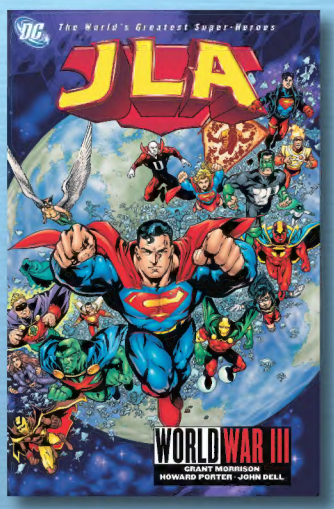
WORLD WAR III



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